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1. Board of Trustees Minutes - 1930 - 1954
2. Board of Trustees Minutes 1955-1967  
Report of the Director 1931-1946  
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MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF  
THE INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY

January 23, 1939

A regular meeting of the Trustees of the Institute for Advanced Study was held at the Uptown Club, 60 East 42nd Street, New York City, on Monday, January 23, 1939.

Present: Messrs. Edgar S. Bamberger, Louis Bamberger, Carrel, Flexner, Friedenwald, Hardin, Maass, Riefler, Veblen, Weed, and Miss Sabin.

Absent and excused: Messrs. Aydelotte, Houghton, Leidesdorf, Stewart, Straus, and Mrs. Fuld.

In the absence of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman, Mr. Maass, presided.

The minutes of the meeting held on October 10, 1938, having been distributed, their reading was dispensed with, and they were approved.

The following report was presented by the Director and, on motion, was accepted and ordered to be incorporated in the minutes of the meeting:

The first term of the sixth active year of the Institute has passed busily and productively. The relatively large mathematical group shows no loss in enthusiasm or fertility. Professor von Neumann has been elected to membership in the American Philosophical Society, a distinguished honor for one who has so recently come to the United States and who has just reached the middle thirties. He was also in October last awarded the Bôcher Prize for his work in his special field. The prize, founded by the late Professor Bôcher of Harvard, is given once in five years. Of seven persons who have received it in the last thirty-five years four are at Princeton, and a fifth now at Harvard was formerly a professor at Princeton.

The mathematicians who have previously been members of the Institute and who have returned to their former or to more advanced posts continue to give a good account of themselves. I have a recent note from Professor Murnaghan of the Johns Hopkins, who sends me a copy of his new book called Theory of Group Representations. He writes that without the leisure afforded him by his stay in Princeton he doubts whether he would have embarked on the undertaking of writing this book. Other professors and members have also made important contributions, too numerous to mention in this report.

We are looking forward with great enthusiasm to a protracted visit from Professor Niels Bohr of Copenhagen, who has just arrived in Princeton. Professor Bohr is not only one of the most distinguished mathematical physicists in Europe, but has in the difficulties which have overwhelmed German and Austrian mathematicians shown himself a humanitarian of the widest sympathy. Under his roof there have been sheltered a succession of distinguished men, who have been his guests until they have found suitable positions in other parts of the world.

I feel similar satisfaction with the activities of the humanistic group. Professor Meritt, like Professor von Neumann, has been made a member of the American Philosophical Society. He and Professor Capps have also been chosen honorary members of the Greek Archaeological Society in Athens as has likewise Professor Shear of Princeton, who has charge of the Agora excavations. The three men have worked in closest harmony, and it is pleasant to record that of the four honorary memberships recently created by the Greek Archaeological Society three belong to the Princeton groups.

Professor Panofsky was invited by Northwestern University to give a series of lectures on Albrecht Dürer, which we are informed were most enthusiastically received. The series of lectures which he gave at Bryn

Mawr and repeated at Princeton last year will shortly be issued by the Oxford University Press, and this will be followed by the series more recently given in Evanston, Illinois. Professor Herzfeld has one volume soon to appear and a second book almost ready to be published in Paris. Professor Lowe's great publication moves on steadily. Others could be mentioned in the same terms.

The Institute has received a gift of one hundred Korean books on the subject of art and philosophy from Dr. Kei-won Chung, a Princeton Ph.D., who is working with Dr. Swann in the Gest Oriental Library. Also, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Woods Bliss of Washington have provided the sum of \$3,500.00 which will be used to bring temporarily to the Institute Professor Doro Levi, one of the first victims of the new Italian racial and religious laws. Professor Doro Levi, who has been welcomed by all his colleagues in Princeton, will give a series of lectures during the second half year on Etruscan art; he has also been invited by New York University to lecture to the advanced students of the Graduate Institute of Art and Archaeology.

With the beginning of the second term Mr. Stewart and Mr. Warren have taken up their active duties. As additional rooms were needed, an advantageous and economical arrangement was made with the Princeton Inn where they, Mr. Riefler, and a few foreign workers in the field of economics will be comfortable until Fuld Hall is ready for occupancy in the early autumn. Among these visitors are Professor Henry Clay, formerly professor of the University of Manchester and now financial adviser to the Bank of England; Mr. Fleming, an Edinburgh economist, brought to the United States by the Rockefeller Foundation; and Professor John Jewkes, professor of economics at the University of Manchester. Mr. Warren, Mr. Clay, and Professor Wolman of Columbia are each this month giving three lectures at McGill University, Montreal, on the economic aspects of social organization.

Thus at the very outset the quality of the Institute economic group has been recognized. Since writing this report I have read Mr. Warren's lectures and have been delighted with their lucidity, restraint, and learning. I am amazed at the range of Mr. Warren's knowledge and experience.

The instances which I have given are not exhaustive, but they are indicative of the quality of work which has been carried on by the Institute and its prompt recognition in our own country and abroad. I have frequent occasions to discuss with scholars the question as to what gives the Institute its unique character. Few Americans have had actual experience with organizations like our own, for American scholars have been usually confined to university work which involves a regular teaching schedule, small or large, and incidental opportunities for research under conditions that leave something to be desired. What is it that distinguishes the Institute from the most advanced type of university organization in this country? In a general way, our Institute can, I think, be fairly described in words that Mr. Stewart recently quoted to me:

"The deepest joy in life is to be creative. To find an undeveloped situation, to see the possibilities, to identify yourself with something worth while doing, put yourself into it, and stand for it - that is a satisfaction in comparison with which superficial pleasures are trivial."

We cannot, I think, too frequently remind ourselves that between the Institute and a university there are characteristic and profound differences - differences that in the years to come must never be lost sight of. Perhaps most important of all is the way the Institute is set up. Instead of an all-embracing school like a graduate school made up of various departments which are directed and managed through faculty meetings, committees, and deans, the Institute has from its very inception been composed of practically "autonomous, self-governing groups". There are, of course, interests and experiences which the various groups have

in common, but, inasmuch as Princeton is a small town and members of the Institute see one another frequently in informal fashion as they meet also the Director, Trustees of the Institute, and members of the Princeton faculty, these common experiences and interests can be most profitably discussed when absolute informality prevails. Each of the three schools has its own individual needs and its own individual problems. It would be a waste of time and a hindrance to effective progress if the three groups were regarded as a faculty which met at stated intervals and legislated for the entire Institute: the mathematicians, for example, do not wish to legislate for the humanists or vice versa. By making the several groups autonomous and self-governing each has been able to advance in the ways best suited to the subject with which it deals and to the performance of which it is committed. Informal meetings within each group take place frequently. Conclusions are reached which sometimes apply to the entire group and sometimes only to some particular individual. Thus not only the group is self-governing, but the individual professor is self-governing. The Institute is small and compared with a university should forever remain small. Effort can therefore be unified without being regimented.

Professor Royce of Harvard once remarked to me that he had no difficulty whatsoever in understanding the "Absolute" of Hegel; what he could never understand were the proceedings of a faculty meeting. To be sure, at long intervals some point of general interest may arise on which the faculty should be brought together and consulted, and its views or conflicting views should be transmitted to the trustees, but anything more than this would be a waste of time and energy and would be the first step in forming a routine which might ultimately choke what is today the outstanding merit of the Institute.

The spirit of the permanent group pervades the ranks of those

who as members come to Princeton for limited periods. They attach themselves to this or that person or persons and themselves seek out the activities which it will best profit them to pursue. There is no danger that so mature and carefully selected a group as the members will fail to profit by the rich opportunities offered to them. There is far greater danger that, as time is short, they will overwork. The wife of an Englishman now working with Professor Mitrany asked not long ago in all seriousness whether everyone in the Institute stays up and works until two o'clock in the morning.

The preservation of the autonomy of the schools of the Institute, the absence of regulations adopted at faculty meetings - both these seem to me to distinguish the Institute from a university and to be of inestimable importance to its free and effective functioning. No rules have been laid down, and no rules necessarily applicable to all three schools or within each school applicable to all individuals alike should ever be laid down. If we cling to the principle that no one will be asked to join the faculty who has not already demonstrated high intellectual quality, we need have no fear of either stagnation or chaos.

The same informality is characteristic of the relations which are developing between the Institute and Princeton University. No effort has been made, and no effort should ever be made to reduce these relations to formal shape. Once more, the smallness of the town conduces to intimacy, social and intellectual, between the Princeton professors and the Institute workers and professors. No human being is wise enough to devise a formula which will fit every contingency. Each of the two institutions has its own specific functions to perform. Each contains eminent men. The Institute has for six years allowed its members to seek each other out and to enjoy the fullest and freest social and intellectual contact with one another. I can perhaps give no more striking instance of the helpful

way in which informality works than by citing one or two specific instances.

My attention was recently called to a young German, thirty years of age, working in the field of international politics, who was described to me as a brilliant person already known to Professor Whitton of Princeton University. I called Professor Whitton by telephone, and he replied that this young man whom he had known for two years was one of the ablest young men whom he had ever met. I found that his work was known to our own Professor Earle, who gave me an equally high opinion of its importance. With little difficulty I procured for him - mainly from outside sources - the modest sum needed to bring him to Princeton. It took less than twenty-four hours to consummate the entire arrangement, and Dr. Herz, the young man in question, is now working with Professor Whitton of the University and Professor Earle of the Institute and is happier than he has ever been in his whole life.

A similar incident happened recently in the mathematical field. Professor Lefschetz of the University came to see me one day to tell me that he was rewriting his book on the subject of topology. He had sent his proofs to eight mathematicians, seven of whom had returned them with a few suggestions. The eighth was a former Princeton student of his, who, he said, had slashed his manuscript to pieces and compelled him to rewrite the book. The young man in question had already been agreed upon as one of those who would be invited to come to the Institute next year to spend a year or a year and a half working at Fine Hall and Fuld Hall. He will thus enjoy not only the facilities offered by the Institute, but also be in close contact with the teacher by whom he was originally inspired.

It may be asked what under these circumstances is the role of a director. The answer is an easy one. It may at any time be his most important function to have the final word - after conference inside and outside the Institute - in the matter of faculty appointments, though the presumption

is strong that the members of a given school are the best and the proper judges. It is also the business of the Director, using such income as is annually available, to enable the scholars, who really are the Institute, to do, in so far as is humanly possible and reasonable, what they themselves regard as important. That is, of course, a more complex and delicate task where there are three schools, each moving ahead with interest and enthusiasm, than it was at the outset when the Director had only to deal with the mathematical group; but it has not been a difficult or an unpleasant task, for the members of the various groups respect each other thoroughly and have been fair and broad-minded in recognizing the needs of one another. I must in fairness add that the autonomy of the several schools and the lack of centralization, one of the vital characteristics of the Institute, make a heavy demand upon those who, as so-called secretaries, are associated not only with the Director's office but with each of the three schools. It would, I think, be very difficult indeed to find anywhere else a group of young women of the devotion, intelligence, and scholarship characteristic of those whom we call for the lack of a better name secretaries, though the word "secretary" is altogether inadequate to describe the responsibilities which they discharge and the demands which are made upon them. Does this mean anything resembling disorder? Far from it. Informal but effective centralization such as is needed in the conduct of any enterprise involving the expenditure of money takes place in the office of the Director and the Secretary of the Institute. Thus expenditures are kept strictly to the limitations of the budget, and the instructions of the Board are effectually carried out. This will all be made easier when the various parts of the Institute are gathered together beneath the roof of Fuld Hall, but, scattered as we are, with improvised quarters and facilities we have lived happily and cooperated effectively so that professors, members, and secretaries have from the beginning formed a happy and efficient group, every member of which has

been interested not only in his or her work, but in the welfare of the Institute and the cultivation of friendly and helpful relations with Princeton University and other universities, even those at a distance.

I would not have the Board believe that the Institute is in all these respects absolutely unique. Prior to the present regime in Germany the various institutes maintained by the Kaiser Wilhelm Gesellschaft worked very much as the Institute for Advanced Study is working. It is interesting to note that of the two men who were directors of the Kaiser Wilhelm Gesellschaft the first, Professor Harnack, was the most distinguished theologian in Germany, the second, Professor Planck, one of the most distinguished mathematical physicists. Harnack, the theologian, established institutes of physical chemistry, genetics, and physiology, most of them at Dahlem. Planck, the mathematical physicist, intimate friend of Einstein and others of our mathematical group, established a second physiological institute at Heidelberg and an institute of economics at Kiel. Of the various institutes supported by the Kaiser Wilhelm Gesellschaft each operated individually as our own several schools operate. They were autonomous, they were sympathetic with one another, but no effort was ever made to standardize their procedure. German science reached its highest level in the work of the various institutes maintained by the Kaiser Wilhelm Gesellschaft, though in recent years with perhaps a single exception they have all been reduced to mediocrity or worse.

Individuals here and there, both in this country and in Europe, though connected with more highly organized faculties, enjoy as individuals the kind of freedom and opportunity which everybody enjoys in the Institute for Advanced Study. Our form of organization and our procedure are therefore vindicated by experiments which have been made elsewhere both in this country and in Europe, though we have in some respects not hesitated to vary our own activities whenever the ends for which the Institute was established could be best served.

Since we last met, a beginning has been made in the construction of Fuld Hall, but I do not feel that I am the person to give an account of the building situation. This pleasure I yield to the Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Maass, who with his associates on the committee has been unwearied in giving time and thought to all the problems connected with its construction. In addition, Mr. Maass and his legal associates have responded promptly without expense to the Institute to every call which we have made involving any kind of legal question whatsoever. I must pay the same tribute to the Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer and those associated with them in their office. They have taken infinite pains in the conduct of our financial affairs and have thus relieved the office of the Director of many and varied responsibilities.

The interest and confidence of the Founders have never fluctuated, and it is a source of immense satisfaction to us all that Mr. Bamberger and Mrs. Fuld enjoy the fruits of their wise and far-sighted generosity. Mrs. Fuld, I rejoice to say, has improved in health and, but for the severe cold, would have attended today's meeting.

After concluding his report, the Director stated that he would welcome an expression of opinion regarding his views.

Professor Veblen, while agreeing in the main and particularly with the strong emphasis on the autonomy of the three schools, thought that occasional faculty meetings would be advantageous inasmuch as they would familiarize all members of the faculty with matters concerning the Institute as a whole.

Dr. Weed suggested that the group might be brought together to approve the recommendations regarding assistants, etc. of the various schools.

Mr. Flexner pointed out that the groups were so highly specialized that it would be difficult for a humanist, for instance, to pass on an appointment in the School of Mathematics, and vice versa.

Dr. Carrel in very emphatic language upheld strictly the point of view which the Director's report had taken. He took the position that this report was a clear statement of the fundamental principles underlying the organization and conduct of an institute for advanced study. Informality, absence of rules, autonomy of the several schools were, in his judgment, the principles absolutely necessary which distinguished a living and growing institution from one which otherwise would inevitably harden and grow old. All endowed scientific institutes with the exception of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute had grown old and largely ceased to develop because through the accumulation of rules a bureaucratic spirit had developed. He thought the report by far the most important one that the Director had ever submitted, and he expressed the wish that every person charged with a responsibility like that of the Director might have access to this clear formulation of the only principles which could possibly enable the Institute to retain its vigor and vitality indefinitely. If the Institute adheres to the principles of selection which have thus far guided it and retains the autonomy, flexibility, and complete absence of rules and regulations, it will, in his judgment, never become senile.

Dr. Sabin strongly endorsed the views expressed by the Director and emphasized by Dr. Carrel. The cardinal point for the continued welfare of the Institute is to retain the ability to choose the right people for the faculty. This can be obtained, as at present, through consultation by the Director with the existing faculty with help and cooperation from outside authorities. It is possible, however, that occasions may arise when certain general matters affecting everyone might be handled more wisely through discussions of the

faculty with adequate opportunity to present the view or the varying views of the faculty to the Director and the Trustees. This could be brought about as occasion arose without previous formal organization. As an example of the kind of thing in reference to which the faculty might profitably meet, she instanced the discussion of a plan for retirement, which, however, in the case of the Institute for Advanced Study was disposed of when the Institute was organized.

Dr. Weed cited the instance of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, parts of which are isolated, and stated that the officers of the Institution had found it desirable to bring together the members of the staff in informal conferences in Washington. These conferences had proven to be of utmost value in the conduct of affairs of the Institution.

Mr. Riefler stated that the fundamental importance of the Directorship lay, not in administration as such, which Dr. Flexner has reduced to a minimum, but in the selection of personnel. The power, standing, and value of the Institute - in fact, its whole future - were inseparably tied up with the quality of the persons who were called to professorships. During his period at the Institute Mr. Riefler had been amazed at the spirit of loyalty to each other and to the Institute that permeated the faculty. There was a superb group spirit among the different professors, who were happy in doing their work and were sympathetic with their colleagues. The point made by Professor Veblen which impressed itself upon him most was the extent to which some of the professors appeared to be ignorant of what the Institute was doing. When it was necessary to restrict the budget last year, for instance, the questions asked by some of the professors indicated less familiarity with the Institute and

its problems than he had thought possible. It was his hope that the completion of Fuld Hall next year and the gathering of all of the professors under one roof which that would make possible would remedy this situation. Under all these circumstances, he stated that he personally would not be in favor of disturbing the existing situation.

Mr. Hardin and Mr. Maass were also of the opinion that, if there was a problem, it would disappear when the faculty instead of being scattered was housed in Fuld Hall.

The Director in closing the discussion stated that he had no objection whatsoever to the faculty's meeting whenever it pleased but that, in his opinion, any regular machinery such as faculty meetings, committee meetings, etc., would annoy the most productive and fertile minds in the Institute and tend to increase the importance of those who were intellectually less important, in case persons answering this description were ever members of any of the schools. As for himself, he had no desire to participate, just as he did not attend the meetings of those composing the several schools because he did not wish by his presence to interfere with the utmost freedom of discussion. Therefore should the faculty choose to meet, he would not attend unless a meeting were called for some such specific object as Dr. Sabin had indicated.

Mr. Hardin, Chairman of the Finance Committee, reported the investment holdings as of January 16, 1939, summarizing them as follows:

INVESTMENT HOLDINGS

MARKET VALUE - January 16, 1939

	<u>Amount</u>	<u>% Total</u>
Cash - Uninvested	\$ 185,000.00	2.3%
Bonds	4,847,534.00	61.7%
Preferred Stocks	901,201.00	11.5%
Common Stocks	1,526,109.00	19.4%
Real Estate Bonds and Mortgages	145,480.00	1.8%
Premium Annuity	148,614.00	1.9%
Professors' Homes - Mortgages Rec. and Advances	107,936.00	1.4%
Total	<u>\$7,861,874.00</u>	<u>100.0%</u>

Book Value \$7,898,837.00

Annual Income Yield \$316,520.00

Mr. Schur, Assistant Treasurer, when called on, stated that the income for the half year ended December 31, 1938, was \$157,500.00 and that the expenses were \$163,000.00. He added that the expenditures were within the budget for the period but the income had decreased and, as far as one could now determine, there would be at the end of the year, June 30, 1939, a deficit of \$5,000.00 or \$6,000.00.

At the meeting held on October 10, 1938, it was suggested that the Institute should publish once a year a financial statement. After discussion, on motion, it was

RESOLVED, That a summarized financial statement be published in the annual Bulletin of the Institute.

Mr. Maass, Chairman of the Committee on Buildings and Grounds, reported that the foundations of the new building were virtually complete, the roads were in process of construction, the contracts sublet for each part of the building, and that he had every assurance that the building would be ready for occupancy next September. He stated that the Committee was anxious to have the corner-stone laid at the time of the next meeting of the Board and thought that it would be advisable to postpone this meeting until May when the weather would be warmer and more settled that Mrs. Fuld and Mr. Bamberger might attend.

Thereupon, on motion, it was

RESOLVED, That the meeting scheduled for April 17, 1939, be postponed to May 22, 1939, that the laying of the cornerstone take place at noon and be followed by the luncheon and business meeting.

The Director called attention to the proposal to modify the By-Laws by omitting the words ex officio except in reference to the Founders and Chairman as ex officio members of committees. The modification was approved, and the By-Laws with these alterations will be submitted to the Members at the next annual meeting.

The Director stated that the Institute had been exempted from insuring liability for compensation but was obliged to file a statement with the State of New Jersey Insurance Department as to the method of handling its compensation liability. Thereupon, on motion, it was

RESOLVED, That the duties of a self-insurer, under the laws of the State of New Jersey be performed in behalf of the Institute for Advanced Study by the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees through the executive officers of the Institute.

The Director stated the advisability of having the assurance of an appropriation for stipends made a year in advance in order that the professors might have sufficient time to make arrangements with universities regarding leave of absence of candidates for stipends, but that it had been deemed inadvisable to do so at the October meeting on account of the uncertainty of the financial situation at that time. He recommended that partial appropriations be now made, leaving the possibility of subsequent increase dependent on circumstances. He reported that for the current year the stipends were as follows:

School of Mathematics	\$30,000.00
School of Economics and Politics	2,500.00
School of Humanistic Studies	18,150.00

and that from outside sources the School of Humanistic Studies had received \$18,550.00, making a total of \$36,700.00 for that school. Thereupon, on motion, it was

RESOLVED, That the sum of Seventeen thousand five hundred Dollars (\$17,500.00) be included in the budget for the year, 1939-1940, to be distributed in the fields of mathematics and theoretical physics, and that the sum of Ten thousand Dollars (\$10,000.00) be included in the budget for the year, 1939-1940, to be distributed for stipends in the field of humanistic studies.

Mr. Maass explained the arrangement made between the Institute and Professor and Mrs. Weyl in respect to retiring allowance and pension in the event that Professor Weyl predecease his wife. He called attention to the fact that the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting of September 6, 1933, contained a motion at variance with the arrangement which had been subsequently made by the Board. Thereupon, on motion, it was

RESOLVED, That the Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting, September 6, 1933, be modified by omitting the following paragraph: That he be granted an additional allowance of Fifteen hundred Dollars (\$1,500.00) a year to enable him to purchase such insurance as he may choose.

The Director stated that Professor John A. Wheeler, formerly a member of the Institute, had become a professor in Princeton University, had applied to the Institute for the privilege of purchasing an Institute lot and building thereon, and Mr. Larson, the architect of the Institute, approved the plan. Thereupon, on motion, it was

RESOLVED, That the lot between the property of Mr. Saunders and the property of Mr. Panofsky be sold to Mr. John A. Wheeler for Fifteen hundred Dollars (\$1,500.00) and that Mr. Wheeler pay in addition Fifteen hundred Dollars (\$1,500.00) for the services on it.

There being no further business, on motion, the meeting adjourned.